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ON PAGE A-17

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Classified [ad] info: CIA is recruiting

"To you we say these are times to put your training and ability to work where it really counts: at the CIA."

By Storer Rowley

Chicago Tribune Press Service

WASHINGTON—The Central Intelligence Agency is thriving, and it is making no secret of the fact it is hiring steadily at a time when other federal employees are being laid off in droves.

The nation's super-secret espionage agency is not just looking for a few good career spies. Also wanted are a variety of computer programmers and analysts, economists and scientists, nuclear engineers and language experts, and others ranging "from secretaries up to laser beam technicians."

In fact, the CIA has gone public with a cross-country radio campaign as part of an overall buildup under way at the agency.

"If you would like to shape a world to come, send your resume to the Central Intelligence Agency," intoned the voice on a 60-second radio spot played for several days in Washington and Los Angeles. It followed earlier radio campaigns in Salt Lake City, Atlanta and Harrisburg, Pa.

MORE APPLICANTS than ever before are sending in resumes, according to CIA officials, and the cloak-and-dagger business is booming. The radio ads have been very successful.

After nearly a decade of internal cuts and public criticism, the 35-year-old agency has once again become a growth industry fueled by hardliners in the Reagan administration, a general improvement in its public image and an ongoing recruitment campaign on college campuses and with radio, newspaper and magazine advertising.

The agency never discloses personnel or budget figures, but CIA Director William J. Casey has said that for the last two years the agency has been undergoing a buildup that began in the closing year of the Carter administration.

Casey has only characterized the buildup as generally in line with the country's defense buildup. If so, that could be a substantial increase in budget and manpower. President Reagan has asked Congress for a record peacetime Defense Department budget of \$258

billion for next year, which is about a 13 percent boost over this year's Pentagon budget.

WHILE REAGAN is trying to cut back on social programs and to eliminate the Departments of Energy and Education, defense-related and national security agencies are getting beefed up. For example, plans are going ahead to construct a 1.1 million square foot office building, parking structure and security reception center at the CIA's headquarters complex in nearby Langley, Va.

Henry Walton, deputy chief of the CIA's recruitment division, acknowledged in an interview that the agency is growing. But he cautioned that the CIA isn't making "wholesale increases." He called the increase "modest."

Walton denied there is a "major advertising effort" under way, but described it as rather an "ongoing" recruitment campaign.

"We need to compete for good applicants just like any other business or concern," Walton explained. "We've got to make sure that the public knows that the Central Intelligence Agency is hiring."

WALTON SAID the agency is trying to gain a "share of mind" of an individual who may be happily employed now but will remember the CIA when it comes time for a job change.

"We also have have about 800 to 1,000 resumes a week that are essentially unsolicited," Walton said. "There are people who are astonished that we get our people by advertising. And some do go on to covert work. We do get a number of people (through ads) in our career training program . . . those individuals who will ultimately train for service abroad as an intelligence officer."

Walton attributed the recent upsurge in applicants not only to the agency's increased advertising but also to the recession. Nationwide unemployment now stands at 9.5 percent, the highest rate since World War II.

Congressional sources familiar with the House and Senate intelligence oversight committees agree with CIA officials that the agency's public image has improved, spurring more interest in joining the agency than a decade ago.

BY SOME ESTIMATES worldwide CIA spying during the Vietnam war, including the

agency's "secret army" in Laos, swelled the number of CIA operatives to about 8,500 in the late 1960s.

In the mid-1970s, congressional investigation of the agency produced better oversight of intelligence activities. Then the Carter administration further restricted the agency.

The CIA's budget was cut by about 40 percent and its personnel by half during those years, according to Casey. In August, 1977, then-Director Stansfield Turner announced the elimination of 816 jobs in the operations division. The so-called "Halloween massacre" came the following Oct. 31, when Turner sent out the first 212 pink slips.

But the tide has turned around again.

THE BUSINESS OF spying, however, is still a very selective and exclusive affair, and agency publicity has the dual effect of promoting the CIA's image by calling on only the best applicants to apply:

- The radio ad states that graduate and undergraduate degrees are necessary and seeks "men and women with backgrounds in computer and physical sciences, economics, engineering, languages or foreign area studies . . . Qualifications are high, but so are the rewards and the benefits."

- A CIA newspaper ad asks a series of questions as to whether an applicant can tolerate pressure, make quick decisions, lead and motivate others and withstand hardship. "Many men and women bored with their present 9 to 5 jobs merely fantasize that they are cut out for the demanding work that a career with the CIA entails," the ad says. "If there is the slightest doubt in your mind about yourself, read no further. Save your time and ours."

- An agency recruiting booklet, "Intelligence: the Acme of Skill," also cautions that the work is hard and not for everyone, and it describes intelligence as having "less to do with cloaks and daggers than with the painstaking, generally tedious collection of facts, analysis of acts, exercise of judgment and quick, clear evaluation."

Starting salaries for CIA recruits begin at about \$16,000 a year and can go as high as \$25,000 for well qualified applicants, and recruits are needed for more than 100 different job categories, Walton said.